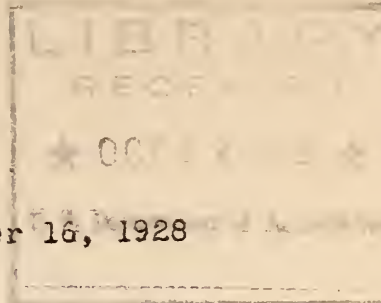


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics
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FOREIGN NEWS ON HONEY

GOOD OUTLOOK FOR AMERICAN HONEY IN GERMANY

The poorest honey crop in several decades is expected in the important producing sections of northern Germany this year, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul E. Talbot Smith at Hamburg. Agriculture in Schleswig Holstein continues on the decline as a result of the unfavorable weather which has prevailed during the last four summers. Bee stocks have decreased and a number of hives remain without mother bees. Only very small quantities of honey were collected by the bees during the summer because of the stormy, cold and rainy weather. Many apiarists have given up their hives, and membership in beekeepers' clubs has sharply decreased. In the southern and eastern sections of Germany, however, the honey crop is expected to be about average. The section of the country producing heather honey experienced the worst weather, and practically no heather honey is expected this year.

The extent of the honey shortage in Germany this year is indicated by the fact that imports during the first seven months of 1928 amounted to 11,489,000 pounds as compared with 8,575,000 pounds during the corresponding period last year. Imports during all of 1927 amounted to 17,271,000 pounds as compared with 12,054,000 pounds during 1926. The United States and Cuba are the most important sources of supply for the honey imported into Germany. Other important sources of supply this year have been Chile, Guatemala, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Newfoundland and Mexico.

According to estimates of the German honey importers and wholesale dealers, the consumption of honey in Germany amounts to about 20,000 metric tons (approximately 44,000,000 pounds) annually. Honey is used not only as a table delicacy, as in the United States, but also as an ingredient in the production of Honig Kuchen, Lebkuchen, and other distinctively German bakery products. The demand for honey is increased by the advertising put forth by dealers urging its use as a health food and tonic because of its lime and phosphoric acid content. It is also recommended particularly for those suffering from nervousness and is advertised as a "brain food".

There is a fair demand in the markets of northern Germany for the lighter varieties of honey for table use, particularly for the American Alfalfa, Sage, Orange, and White Sweet Clover varieties, states Consul Smith. There is little market for the dark or buckwheat honey, as it is unpopular in its natural state because of its strong flavor. Small amounts of such honey are used by the bakeries, but the demand is usually met by the domestic producers and it enters very little into the Germany import trade. The slight import demand for the dark varieties is usually met by Central American producers.

Some idea of the honey price situation in the Hamburg market may be gained from the following quotations prevailing on September 12, 1928: Light Amber Alfalfa \$8.62 per 100 pounds, White Sweet Clover \$9.75 per 100 pounds, Thistle \$10.25 per 100 pounds. The Hamburg importers state that they often receive offers of honey direct from American sources located at some distance from the seaboard. Such offers are apparently made with a view to eliminating the middlemen and the exporter, but the amount of business contracted for in that way has been very small, since the prices asked have invariably been higher than those asked by the established exporter.

Most of the foreign honey entering the German market is bought by the large importing houses. These sell to wholesale grocers and brokers, taking a small profit on the transaction. Several of the larger firms, which had been handling imported honey for years have recently decided to drop this line because of the difficulty they experienced in securing honey that grades the same from year to year. The color grader might remove this difficulty, states Consul Smith, but it is not used to any appreciable extent in the Hamburg honey market, although California honey is usually sold on that basis. When disputes as to grade occur, they are handled by the semi-official Hamburg Handelskammer (Chamber of Commerce), which appoints an arbitration board. Most importers do not accept the certificates of the American exporters associations as they prefer to see the honey and then arbitrate if any dispute arises as to quality.

German apiarists have in the past circulated rumors and published newspaper articles attacking the quality of all honey not produced in Germany, claiming that the imported product is ~~impure~~ and not saleable in the countries where it is produced, states Consul Smith. The leading importers of honey have fought the dissemination of such advertising, and according to the latest information available, the spread of such propaganda has practically ceased.

Another cause for the increasing demand for imported honey in the German market is the fact that artificial honey (Kunst Honig) which was quite popular two years ago with the bakers who manufacture Honig Kuchen and Lebkuchen is not being used by them as much as formerly and they are turning to natural honey for baking purposes. The honey used for baking purposes is usually imported in barrels and comes largely from Cuba, Mexico, and San Domingo. If the price of natural honey is too high, however, the bakers immediately turn to artificial honey. It is understood that the latter product is made from formic acid and sugar and its cost only equals the import duty on natural honey.

The German Customs Tariff places a duty of 23 Reichmarks per 100 kilograms (\$4.32 per 100 pounds) on imported honey. If the honey is packed in tins, 9 per cent is allowed for tare, while if packed in bottles, 20 per cent is allowed.

HONEY: Imports into Germany during 1926 and 1927, and the first seven months of 1927 and 1928

Origin	1926	1927	January 1 to July 31	
			1927	1928
	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
United States	2,750,900	6,551,400	3,381,600	3,482,800
Cuba	1,664,700	2,843,700	1,581,600	1,944,900
Guatemala	2,315,500	1,509,000	1,016,100	1,055,600
Chile	901,500	1,214,900	406,700	994,300
Haiti	1,341,500	1,472,600	542,100	870,400
Newfoundland	572,500	a/	93,900	524,200
Dominican Republic .	a/	a/	a/	658,100
Mexico	a/	a/	a/	513,700
Australia	325,100	345,200	346,000	215,400
Russia (U.S.S.R.) ..	a/	a/	a/	356,700
Canada	a/	460,000	197,900	228,800
Other countries	2,182,000	2,874,000	1,009,300	643,700
Total	12,053,700	17,270,800	8,575,200	11,488,600

Source: Monatliche Nachweise über den Auswärtigen Handel Deutschlands.
a/ Included in "other countries", if any.

NOTE: The imports shown above as coming from the United States are substantially less than exports to Germany reported by the United States Department of Commerce, because the latter figures include stock going to the Free Port of Hamburg, which may enter Germany or may go to some other country.

